

and was a member of the University's football team.

After college, Simmons returned to the city of Los Angeles and became a member of the Los Angeles Police Department. During his career, Simmons served in many high-crime areas where he worked to not only protect the local community but also to combat gang activity. His dedication to serving the residents of Los Angeles was well recognized when he earned the distinction of becoming a member of the department's elite SWAT Team.

Simmons was not only a leader to his fellow officers but also a highly respected leader in his community. Serving as an ordained minister, he was an active member of his church and helped to build a community gymnasium. He volunteered much of his time to lead a group ministry that served nearly 1,500 children and also found time to serve as coach for his son's football team. His presence in the community will truly be missed.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring Officer Randal Simmons for his guidance and leadership in fighting to improve the lives of all Angelinos. He is survived by his wife Lisa and their two children, to whom I send my heartfelt condolence. Officer Simmons leaves a lasting legacy of caring and compassion that serves as a model to us all.●

REMEMBERING VADA SHEID

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the life and accomplishments of a great Arkansan, Mrs. Vada Webb Sheid. Mrs. Sheid was a civil servant; she was an entrepreneur; she was an inspiration. After a long battle with Alzheimer's, Vada Sheid passed away on February 11, 2008, at the age of 91. She will be sorely missed.

Born and raised in rural Arkansas near Calico Rock in the north central part of the State, she became known as one of the Twin Lakes area's biggest movers and shakers. She came from a rare breed of politicians, one marked with sincere intentions and a sense of duty. Starting as the Izard County Welfare Director at the young age of 19, her public service career stretched across five decades. Her love of public service, the area, and the people of her area was apparent in her work.

She understood the needs of her constituents and committed her time and efforts to addressing them. From the time she was first elected in 1966, she set out to replace the ferry system on Norfolk Lake by building bridges across it. After nearly 20 years of unwavering pursuit, the Norfolk Lake bridges were constructed, an act credited as her crowning achievement.

Education was another cornerstone of her tenure. As a supporter of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, Mrs. Sheid donated her papers to the University of Arkansas Special Collections in 1989 so that they may be shared and studied for generations to

come. North Central Arkansas did not have much to offer as a means of college education prior to the work of Vada. During her tenure, she introduced a measure that established the North Arkansas Community College in Harrison and was a key factor to the creation of the Arkansas State University at Mountain Home.

Vada and my father, David Pryor, were dear friends and had a close relationship during their many years of public service in Arkansas. I had the privilege of serving with her in the Arkansas House of Representatives. She had this calming influence about her that led her to become a mentor to many of us. Given her reputation, she was trusted as a sounding board across the State on key issues and new ideas. There is not really a story I could tell about Vada Sheid to encompass the person she was. Her story was filled with a lifetime of integrity and a steadfast passion for public service.

Her accomplishments and passion for public service continue to be an inspiration to me. I recognize the value and impact of her work in Arkansas, and during my time in the Senate, I have worked to secure Federal funding for the Vada Sheid Community Center on the Arkansas State University at Mountain Home campus. With the groundbreaking set for April 11, I am committed, now more than ever, to working with stakeholders to complete this project as a tribute to Mrs. Sheid.

Arkansas has a rich heritage of powerful, groundbreaking women. Vada Sheid's accomplishments place her in the ranks of historic greats like Hattie Caraway, Judge Elsijane Trimble Roy, my dear colleague, Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln, and my grandmother, Susie Newton Pryor. This woman rose above the times and crossed milestones in so many of her endeavors. She was the first woman to be elected in her own right to the Arkansas Senate, and the first woman to serve in both Chambers of the Arkansas General Assembly.

My heart goes out to her family, friends, and Arkansans alike as we mourn this loss. Vada left Arkansas and the world a better place than when she found it and her legacy will continue to live on for generations to come.●

RECOGNIZING THE LADY BULLDOGS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President today I wish to honor the Madison High School gymnastics team for winning their 14th consecutive South Dakota State Gymnastics title and breaking the national record for most consecutive State gymnastics team titles. This is truly an impressive accomplishment, and I am proud to have such fine athletes representing the State of South Dakota.

Last year, the Madison High School Bulldogs were tied with Sehome High School from Bellingham, WA, for most consecutive championship wins. How-

ever, as a result of their countless hours of hard work and dedication, the Bulldogs have shown to the Nation their outstanding athletic talent and determination by winning the 2008 State Championship and clinching the national record.

Not only did the Lady Bulldogs top the national record for most consecutive State wins, they also beat their State-best score from last year. Madison had four of the top scores in the vault, the top three in the balance beam, three of the top five in the uneven bars, and two of the top three in the floor exercise. This is evidence of the team's ability to perform well and work together in all of the categories of the championship.

The Lady Bulldogs sealed their 14th win with a final score of 141.896 points. I would like to congratulate all the young women who have worked so hard this year to win the State championship. The gymnasts of the Lady Bulldogs for the 2007-2008 season, in alphabetical order, are as follows: Laura Blom, Danielle Bloom, Katie Breuer, Kassie Finck, Lexi Finck, Theresa Knapp, Katie Mackenzie, Heidi Mogck, Mara Riedel, Sara Rogers, Jessica Strom, Kaitlyn Walker, and Heather Williams.

This remarkable accomplishment would not have been possible without the guidance and encouragement of the team's excellent coaching staff, head coach Maridee Dossett and assistant coach Kindra Wiese. Coach Dossett has been a Lady Bulldog since 1995, first as an athlete and now as a coach. She was part of the team when they won their first State title in 1995. Upon graduation, she has continued to contribute to the team and spur them on to continued success.

Bud Postma, the athletic director of the Lady Bulldogs, said the streak was a testament to past gymnasts and coaches at Madison. Linda Collignon was the coach who started the record-breaking streak 14 years ago. This national record was made possible by the dedication of the gymnasts and coaching staff of the Madison High School gymnastics team throughout the years.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and devotion of the families of the Madison Gymnastics team members and the community of Madison. Without the encouragement and sacrifice from the gymnasts' families and the dedicated support of the Madison community, this amazing accomplishment would not have been possible.

On behalf of the State of South Dakota, I am pleased to congratulate the Lady Bulldogs Gymnastics team on their recordbreaking national accomplishment and wish them the best of luck for their continued success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.